(v) field formations were given strict instructions not to visit any textile unit unless authorized by the senior officers for a specific task. Field formations were also instructed to condone procedural lapses by the manufacturers and traders unless it was done with an intent to defraud the exchequer.

Agreement on economic ties with China

*33. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister

of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of agreements relating to economic ties between India and China were discussed and signed;

(b) if so, to what extent differences between the two countries on economic ties have been removed;

(c) whether both India and China have agreed to improve economic relations between the two countries and have also decided to help each other on economic development;

(d) if so, whether China has also agreed to provide aid to India for various projects; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In order to promote trade and economic cooperation, and remove impediments to bilateral trade and investment, both sides have agreed to take necessary steps.

(d) and (e) China has offered buyer's credit from the Chinese EXIM Bank worth US$500 million.

Delay in launching of Varishtha Bima Pension Yojana

†*34. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZIM:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the launch of Varishtha Bima Pension Yojana has been unduly delayed;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in its implementation; and

(c) the method proposed to be evolved ensuring that nominees are not harassed in getting back the principal amount on demise of senior citizens?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir, there has been no delay.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Life Insurance Corporation of India has informed that the claim procedure has been kept simple.

Amendment to PPF and Post Office Schemes

*35.SHRI LALIT SURI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 630 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th May, 2003 and state:

(a) whether he has received specific suggestions for the amendment of some of the provisions of PPF scheme, 1968 and Post Office Income Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) if no action has so far been taken, by when the same is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Apart from the question and replies of 6th May, 2003 and the hon'ble Member's own suggestions, representation on various issues relating to small savings' schemes are received. These issues covering various aspects like interest rates, etc., provide valuable inputs for framing Government's policy towards small savings.

Places declared protected by ASI

*36. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ASI has declared certain religious places like Jama Masjid in Delhi as protected places;